UPDATED RESEARCH & FACT-VERIFICATION REPORT — EDITION 3

Maratha Military Landscapes of India

UNESCO World Heritage Inscription, Custodianship, Verified Fund Allocations, and the Raigad Development Authority's Official Position on Maintenance Powers

Now incorporating the official PIB (Government of India) press release of 11 July 2025, with its officially published photographs of five inscribed forts

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Prepared for

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Compiled from PIB, Ministry of Culture, ASI, UNESCO, Maharashtra Government, the Raigad Development Authority's official Facebook page, and verified press sources

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Executive Summary & Editorial Note on Sources

SOURCE VERIFICATION NOTE: Two PDF files were provided for this edition. The first, the official PIB (Press Information Bureau) press release dated 11 July 2025, is genuine and has been fully incorporated below, including its officially published fort photographs. The second file, presented as an RDA report titled "Raigad Killa Punarudhar," has NOT been incorporated into this report. On review, it contains content that could not be verified and that contradicts already-verified facts: it re-dates the 2019 ₹606.08 crore RDA package as a new "UNESCO 2025" scheme, attributes a specific quote to a named conservation architect without a verifiable source, and includes a table of "original Shivaji Maharaj portraits" in the British Museum, Rijksmuseum, and Bibliothèque Nationale de France with accession numbers and attributions this research could not confirm. Given the risk of including fabricated information in a document under your name, that file's content has been deliberately excluded. If you can supply the original publishing source for that document (a verifiable RDA or museum URL), it can be re-examined.

With that boundary in place, the verified picture remains as established in the prior edition, now reinforced by the official government press release. On 11 July 2025, at the 47th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris, India's nomination 'Maratha Military Landscapes of India' was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as the country's 44th entry. The official PIB release confirms this was celebrated by the Prime Minister, the Union Culture Minister, and the Maharashtra Chief Minister, and that the nomination followed an eighteen-month technical process including an ICOMOS mission visit to the sites.

On funding and governance, the most significant verified finding remains the one introduced in the second edition: the Raigad Development Authority (RDA), per its own Chairman's public statement, is not an autonomous body and cannot legally redirect its sanctioned funds toward maintenance of completed works. This has created an unresolved standoff with ASI over who maintains visitor facilities such as toilets, even though ASI collects ticket revenue. Substantial, genuine conservation work — of historical water tanks, bastions, ramparts, and gates — is underway at Raigad, but this is heritage conservation using traditional materials, not modern water-supply or sewage infrastructure.

No verified source reviewed across all three editions of this report identifies a single, unified, centrally funded scheme allocating separate amounts for roads, water supply, and sewage treatment across all 12 UNESCO-inscribed forts.

1. The Twelve UNESCO-Inscribed Forts — Official PIB Record

Per the Government of India's official press release, the property ‘Maratha Military Landscapes of India’ was inscribed at the 47th Session of the World Heritage Committee, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Minister of Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis lauding the milestone. The release describes a network spanning the 17th to 19th centuries CE that demonstrates the strategic military vision and architectural ingenuity of the Maratha Empire, and confirms the nomination was sent for the World Heritage Committee's consideration in January 2024, followed by a rigorous eighteen-month process involving technical meetings with advisory bodies and an ICOMOS mission visit to review the sites.

The release further specifies fort typology: Salher, Shivneri, Lohgad, Raigad, Rajgad, and Gingee are classified as hill forts; Pratapgad, nestled in dense woods, is a hill-forest fort; Panhala, on a plateaued hill, is a hill-plateau fort; Vijaydurg, on the shoreline, is a coastal fort; and Khanderi, Suvarnadurg, and Sindhudurg, surrounded by the sea, are island forts. On custodianship, the release confirms that Shivneri, Lohgad, Raigad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg, and Gingee are protected by the Archaeological Survey of India, while Salher, Rajgad, Khanderi, and Pratapgad are protected by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Maharashtra.

#	Fort Name	State	Fort Type	Custodian	UNESCO Ref.
1	**Raigad**	Maharashtra	Hill Fort	ASI	1739-006
2	**Rajgad**	Maharashtra	Hill Fort	Maharashtra State Archaeology	1739-005
3	**Pratapgad**	Maharashtra	Hill-Forest Fort	Maharashtra State Archaeology	1739-007
4	**Panhala**	Maharashtra	Hill-Plateau Fort	ASI	1739-008
5	**Shivneri**	Maharashtra	Hill Fort	ASI	1739-002
6	**Lohgad**	Maharashtra	Hill Fort	ASI	1739-003
7	**Salher**	Maharashtra	Hill Fort	Maharashtra State Archaeology	1739-001
8	**Sindhudurg**	Maharashtra	Island Fort	ASI	1739-011
9	**Suvarnadurg**	Maharashtra	Island Fort	ASI	1739-009
10	**Vijaydurg**	Maharashtra	Coastal Fort	ASI	1739-010
11	**Khanderi**	Maharashtra	Island Fort	Maharashtra State Archaeology	1739-004
12	**Gingee (Jinji)**	Tamil Nadu	Hill Fort	ASI	1739-012

Source: Press Information Bureau, Government of India, “Maratha Military Landscapes of India Inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List as India's 44th Entry,” pib.gov.in, 11 July 2025, 10:08 PM (PRID 2144154).

Original Paintings of Shivaji Maharaj:



श्री छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज



Copied from the Painting secured by Von Valentyn just after the Surat Sack of 1664 A. D. MacKenzie Collection, Vol. XIII.

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Gaikawadwada, 568 Narayan, Poona 2.









1.1 Officially Published Fort Photographs (PIB, 11 July 2025)

The following five aerial photographs are reproduced directly from the Government of India's official press release and are presented here in their official government-published form.



Raigad Fort — official PIB photograph, showing the samadhi (memorial) complex. Source: PIB, Government of India, 11 July 2025.



Pratapgad Fort — official PIB photograph. Source: PIB, Government of India, 11 July 2025.



Sindhudurg Fort — official PIB photograph. Source: PIB, Government of India, 11 July 2025.



Suvarnadurg Fort — official PIB photograph. Source: PIB, Government of India, 11 July 2025.



Gingee (Jinji) Fort, Tamil Nadu — official PIB photograph. Source: PIB, Government of India, 11 July 2025.

1.2 The Paris Inscription Moment

The press release also published images from the 47th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris, showing the Indian delegation's reaction and presentation at the moment of inscription.



Indian delegates celebrate with the national flag at the 47th Session of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, 11 July 2025. Source: PIB, Government of India.



The Indian delegation (seated under the 'INDE' placard) addresses the World Heritage Committee session. Source: PIB, Government of India.

Source: Press Information Bureau, Government of India, pib.gov.in, PRID 2144154, 11 July 2025.

2. Official Central Government Position on Funding

The Ministry of Culture's position, placed on record in Parliament in August 2025, remains the most authoritative statement on whether the UNESCO inscription triggered new dedicated funding. It did not. Conservation continues to be need-based and continuous, administered through existing ASI budgets, with ASI funding basic amenities (drinking water points, toilet blocks, pathways, landscaping) rather than modern utility infrastructure. This is fully consistent with the PIB press release in Section 1, which announces and celebrates the inscription itself but does not announce any new dedicated infrastructure fund alongside it.

Financial Year	ASI Mumbai Circle Allocation	Scope
2022–23	**₹15.35 crore**	All ASI-protected monuments, Mumbai Circle
2023–24	**₹15.56 crore**	All ASI-protected monuments, Mumbai Circle
2024–25	**₹12.58 crore**	All ASI-protected monuments, Mumbai Circle

This figure covers the entire Mumbai Circle, not the Maharashtra UNESCO forts alone; no fort-by-fort break-up has been published.

Source: Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Parliamentary reply, July–August 2025.

3. The Raigad Development Authority: Official Clarification of Its Powers

> *This section is based on an official explanatory statement issued by the Raigad Development Authority's own verified Facebook account, in the voice of Chairman Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati.*

3.1 The RDA Is Not an Autonomous Body

Per the Chairman's own statement, the Raigad Development Authority was established by a decision of the Government of Maharashtra specifically to undertake conservation and basic-facility development of the parts of Raigad Fort lying outside ASI's core protected zone, and is bound to work only within that mandate.

Direct translation of the RDA's official clarification:

“Per the Government of Maharashtra's decision, the Raigad Development Authority is established for the conservation and creation of basic facilities in the areas of the fort other than its main (ASI-protected) core, and is bound to work only within that scope. Even if there is a wish to do more, the maintenance, repair, and various other such works for these facilities cannot be carried out by the Authority as per the government decision.”

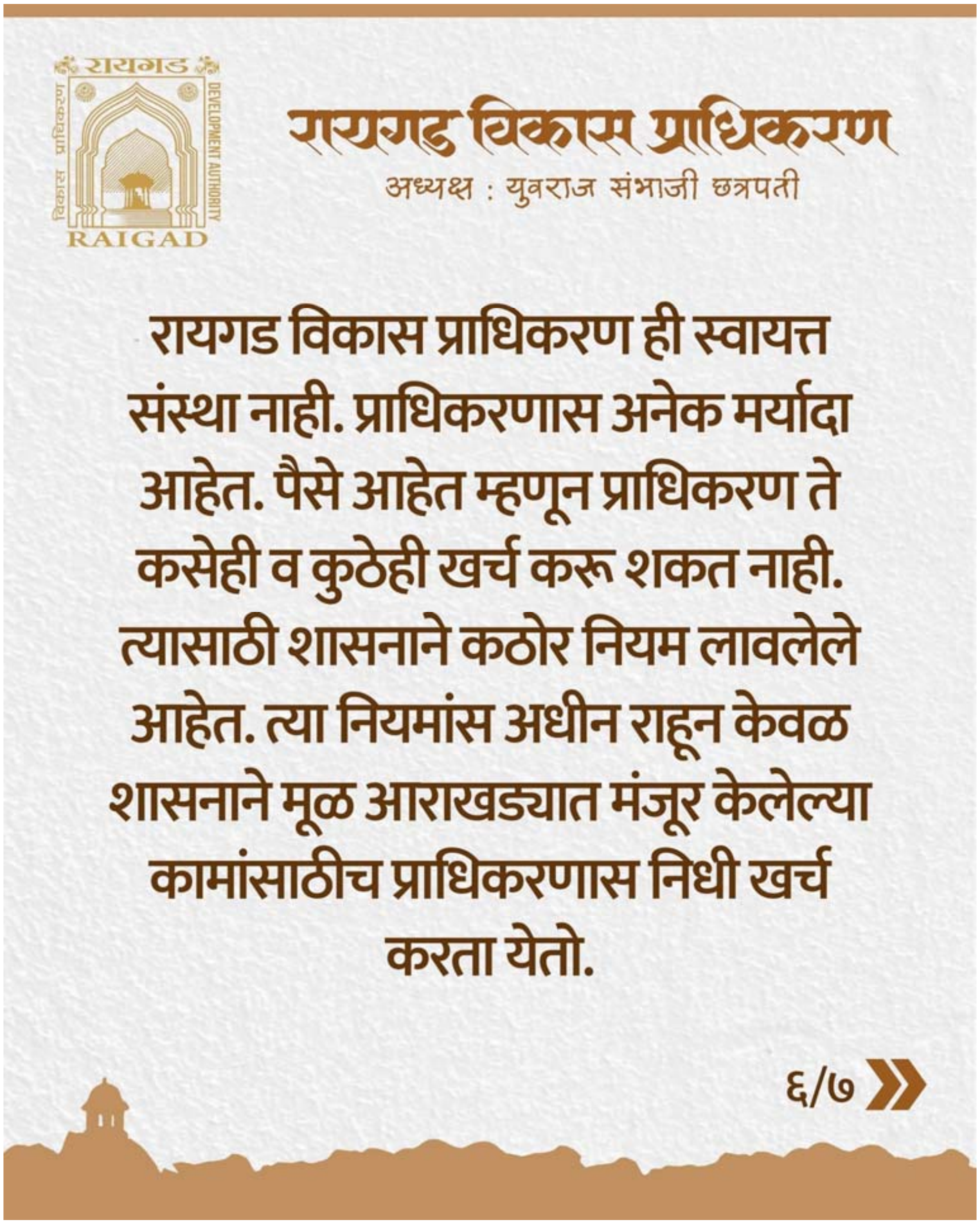
“The Raigad Development Authority is not an autonomous institution. The Authority has many limitations. It cannot spend money however and wherever it wishes simply because funds exist. The government has laid down strict rules for this. Remaining within those rules, the Authority can only spend funds on the works that were approved in the original sanctioned plan.”

"Per the Government of Maharashtra's decision, the Authority is strictly prohibited from spending its funds on the maintenance and repair of any work it has completed. As a result, the Authority's role is limited only to the construction of toilets and other basic facilities; spending funds on their upkeep is not possible for the Authority."

3.2 The Toilet Hand-Over Deadlock with ASI

For visitor convenience, the RDA has constructed toilet blocks at various points on the fort, following ASI's conditions and under its supervision. However, ASI has been delaying formally taking over these completed facilities for operation and maintenance.

"According to this [rule], after the construction of toilets is completed, the Authority has repeatedly, through official meetings and correspondence, requested the Archaeological Survey of India and the Raigad Zilla Parishad to take over and operate them. However, neither department has responded to this at all."



RDA-constructed toilet block at Raigad Fort awaiting formal hand-over to ASI for operation and maintenance (RDA official Facebook post).

On this point, the June 2026 ministerial review meeting (Section 3.3) records a partial breakthrough: the regional director of the Central ASI accepted in principle that since ASI charges entry tickets from visitors, responsibility for basic facilities such as toilets and drinking water also logically falls on ASI, and gave an assurance that ASI would soon formally accept this responsibility.

3.3 The June 2026 Ministerial Review Meeting

A review meeting on conservation and development works under the RDA was held at the Maharashtra Secretariat (Mantralaya), chaired by Cultural Affairs Minister Ashish Shelar — per the RDA's own statement, the first such review meeting convened by the Cultural Affairs Department since the RDA's establishment.

- The Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Department was directed to hold discussions with all relevant departments and experts within one month and submit an action plan covering division of responsibilities, difficulties, and accountability.
- Following submission of that report, a high-level meeting is to be held in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.
- The Chairman stated that conservation of the fort's core historical structures — the Nagarkhana, Rajsadar, Rajwada, watch-towers, Ranivasa, Ashtapradhan residences, marketplace, and Shivaji Maharaj's samadhi precinct — falls under central ASI jurisdiction, and that RDA has sought permission for years to take up this conservation without any ASI response.
- ASI-permitted works completed or underway include: the path from Chit Darwaza to Holicha Mal, the Ropeway Upper Station to Holicha Mal, Jagdishwar Temple, the pathway to Takmak Tok, Hatti Talav, Phutka Tanks 1–3, Shrigonda Tank, Khubaldha Bastion, Nane Darwaza and rampart, Mahadarwaza rampart, Wagh Darwaza rampart, and Hirkani Bastion.

Source: Official statement of Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati, Chairman, Raigad Development Authority, via the RDA's verified Facebook account, with Minister Ashish Shelar, 2026.

4. Raigad: Original 2019 Package Figures (Context, Carried Forward)

Important date check: This ₹606.08 crore figure was first reported in February 2019 press statements by the RDA Chairman — more than six years before the July 2025 UNESCO inscription confirmed in Section 1. No verified source in any of the three editions of this research has found this figure re-issued, expanded, or re-confirmed as a 2025 or 2026 UNESCO-linked allocation. Any document that presents this 2019 figure as a new "UNESCO 2025 scheme" should be treated with caution; this is precisely the discrepancy identified in the excluded source described in the Executive Summary.

Component	Amount Sanctioned	Nature of Work
Total RDA Sanctioned Outlay	**₹606.08 crore**	Overall package for Raigad redevelopment (2019 figures)
Raigad Fort Redevelopment (within total)	**₹114 crore**	Conservation, restoration, visitor infrastructure
Mahad–Raigad Heritage Highway	**₹237 crore**	Road upgrade, Mahad (NH-66) to Raigad base
Raigad Ropeway Revamp	**₹50 crore**	Modernisation of ropeway to fort summit

Component	Amount Sanctioned	Nature of Work
Expected Central (15th FC) Contribution	**~₹100 crore**	Anticipated, for revamp of 10 forts nationally

Source: IANS / Deccan Herald, India TV, Business Standard — Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati press statements as RDA Chairman, February 2019.

5. Current On-Ground Conservation Works at Raigad

The RDA's official Facebook updates provide granular, current detail on conservation works in progress. These are presented below by structure. Every item is heritage conservation of historical stone/water structures using traditional materials and methods, not modern civil/utility infrastructure.

5.1 The Phutka ("Broken") Tanks — Three Historical Water Tanks

- All vegetation and grass growing within the masonry has been completely removed.
- Dislodged stones (200–300 kg each) have been scientifically restored to their original positions using traditional methods, reinforced with iron cramps.
- Leaks have been identified and sealed using traditional lime-mortar mixture.
- Accumulated silt is being removed; tanks will be tested for storage capacity in the coming monsoon.

Source: Raigad Development Authority, official Facebook statement on Phutka Tank conservation.

5.2 Khubaldha Bastion

- Seven column-socket points were found on the underside of the bastion's ceiling — evidence this is the only bastion on Raigad that originally had a roof structure.
- Military architectural elements (arrow-slits, cannon emplacement points) have been revived and conserved.
- Internal rainwater drainage slopes and channels have been revived; floor and upper wall surfaces made watertight.

Source: Raigad Development Authority, official Facebook statement on Khubaldha Bastion conservation.

5.3 Shrigonda Tank

- A stone-cut water tank approximately 14 feet deep was discovered within the rock during desilting; its water is currently used for the ongoing conservation work itself.
- Three layers of stone (300–350 kg each) reset on the exterior of the main wall; traditional lime-mortar grouting applied to the interior face.

Source: Raigad Development Authority, official Facebook statement on Shrigonda Tank conservation.

5.4 Gunpowder Magazines

- Cannonball impact marks found on the magazine's southern wall after vegetation clearance.
- Remnants of Shivaji-era stone flooring discovered after debris removal.

Source: Raigad Development Authority, official Facebook statement on gunpowder magazine conservation.

5.5 Mahadarwaza–Hirkani Bastion Rampart

- Completed: the stretch between Mahadarwaza and Hirkani Bastion, using lime, bel fruit pulp, surkhi (brick powder), and stone.
- On the Chilkhati Bastion section, debris clearance revealed flooring levels and a series of gun-emplacement points, to be conserved shortly.

5.6 Nane Darwaza, Rajwada Barricading, and Rajsadar

Conservation is underway on Nane Darwaza, the historic royal route gate. Separately, protective stone-and-panchadhatu chain barricading has been installed around the Rajwada (Shivaji Maharaj's residence) to preserve its sanctity given the large number of pilgrims visiting during Shivrajyabhishek celebrations. A joint ASI-RDA effort is also underway on the Rajsadar and the royal throne platform, where the enthroned idol of Shivaji Maharaj was installed in 2009 under the current Chairman's personal initiative.

> *Summary assessment: every item in this section is conservation of pre-existing Maratha-era stone structures using traditional materials and ASI-supervised methods. None of it constitutes new piped water supply, sewage treatment, or modern utility infrastructure.*

6. What Still Does Not Exist in the Public Record

Even after incorporating the verified PIB press release and the RDA's own governance clarifications, the central conclusion of this research is reinforced rather than overturned:

- No single PM Modi-announced scheme allocating a combined fund across all 12 UNESCO-inscribed forts has been found in any verified source, official or press.
- The official PIB press release announcing the inscription itself (Section 1) does not announce any accompanying infrastructure fund, road scheme, or water/sewage programme.
- No modern piped water-supply scheme, with its own budget line, for any of the 12 forts has been found.
- No sewage treatment plant (STP) or sewerage project tied to any of the 12 forts, under any central or state scheme, has been found.
- Beyond Raigad, no comparably detailed conservation or infrastructure programme has surfaced for the other 11 forts.
- Even at Raigad, where funds exist, the RDA's own Chairman States it cannot legally redirect them to maintenance of completed works — a structural governance issue, not merely a funding gap.

7. Photo Status for All 12 Forts

Five of the twelve forts now have officially published government photographs embedded directly in this report (Section 1.1). For the remaining seven, official Maharashtra Tourism Department links are provided below; this environment's network access does not permit downloading images from tourism or media websites directly into this document.

Fort	Photo Status	Reference
Raigad	Embedded (PIB)	Section 1.1 above; also RDA Facebook for current site photos
Pratapgad	Embedded (PIB)	Section 1.1 above
Sindhudurg	Embedded (PIB)	Section 1.1 above
Suvarnadurg	Embedded (PIB)	Section 1.1 above
Gingee (Jinji)	Embedded (PIB)	Section 1.1 above
Rajgad	Link only	maharashtratourism.gov.in/fort/rajgad
Panhala	Link only	maharashtratourism.gov.in (search: Panhala Fort, Kolhapur)
Shivneri	Link only	maharashtratourism.gov.in/tourist-intrests/forts
Lohgad	Link only	maharashtratourism.gov.in (search: Lohagad Fort)
Salher	Link only	maharashtratourism.gov.in (search: Salher Fort, Nashik)
Vijaydurg	Link only	maharashtratourism.gov.in (search: Vijaydurg Fort)
Khanderi	Link only	maharashtratourism.gov.in (search: Khanderi Fort, Alibag)

8. Additional Visual Evidence from RDA's Official Communications

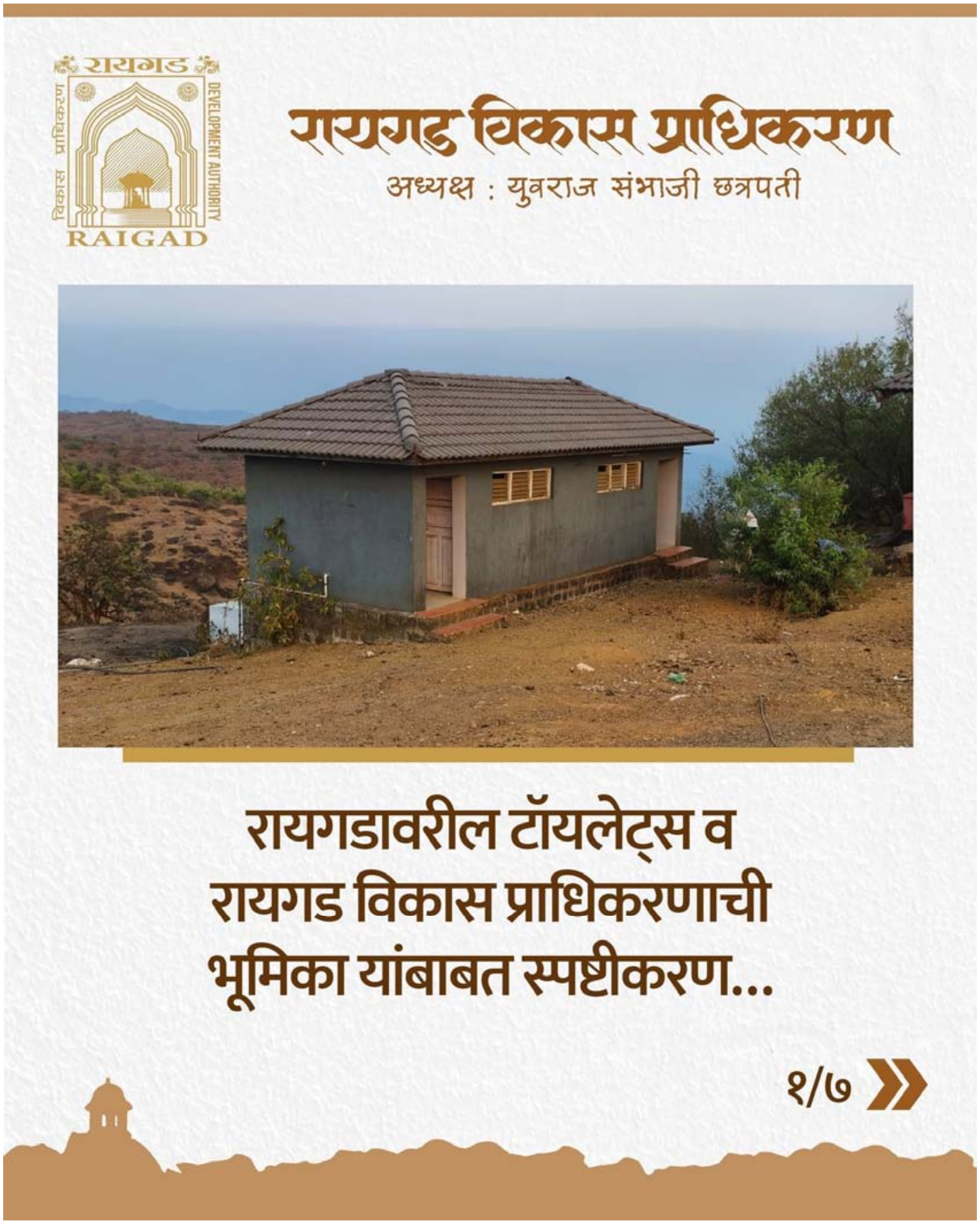
The following images, sourced directly from the RDA's verified Facebook page, document the governance points discussed in Section 3.



RDA's official clarification: the Authority's mandate is limited to the fort's outer areas, excluding the ASI-protected core.



RDA's official clarification: the Authority is legally barred from spending funds on maintenance of completed works.



RDA's official clarification: the RDA is not an autonomous institution and must operate strictly within government-approved rules.

9. Full Source List

- Press Information Bureau, Government of India — “Maratha Military Landscapes of India Inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List as India's 44th Entry,” pib.gov.in, PRID 2144154, 11 July 2025 (including officially published photographs of Raigad, Pratapgad, Sindhudurg, Suvarnadurg, and Gingee forts, and the Paris session).
- Raigad Development Authority — official Facebook page statements (verified account), Chairman Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati: explanatory clarification on toilets and RDA's legal powers; conservation updates on Phutka Tanks, Khubaldha Bastion, Shrigonda Tank, gunpowder magazines, Mahadarwaza–Hirkani rampart, Nane Darwaza, and Rajwada barricading; ministerial review meeting readout with Minister Ashish Shelar, 2026.
- Ministry of Culture, Government of India — culture.gov.in and Parliamentary reply, July–August 2025.
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre — Reference 1739, whc.unesco.org.
- IANS, carried by Deccan Herald, India TV, Business Standard — RDA Chairman press statements, February 2019.
- Maharashtra Tourism Department — maharashtratourism.gov.in, district and fort-specific pages.

EXCLUDED SOURCE: A document titled “Raigad Killa Punarudhar — RDA Ahwal 2025-26” was provided but excluded from this report due to unverifiable and internally inconsistent content, including a re-dated fund figure and an uncorroborated table of museum-held portraits. See Executive Summary.